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186 159 208 victions. Not only was the colonization of Alaska itself 'progressive' and 'democratic', the management of the Russian-American Company also was. One of its chief executives, K. F. Ryleev, was executed for his part in the December rising of 1825, and there were other prominent 'Decembrists' among the officials of the Company.[33]

208 563 Soviet propaganda has tried to show that Baranov and Kuskov conducted a progressive policy towards the natives of North America, totally different from the Anglo-Saxon or Spanish policy towards Red Indians. This is untrue and has been contradicted by Russian sources themselves. A Russian naval officer, who visited Alaska at the time of Russian occupation, has given the following eloquent description of Baranov's policy towards Eskimos and Aleuts: 'Woe to those who resisted him. He destroyed them mercilessly, deported them to uninhabited islands, deprived them of all means of contact with each other, and mixed people of various tribes so that there could be no malicious conspiracy against the Russians. He was feared by the savages, they considered him as the scourge of heaven. Since they had no chance to revolt they were forced to become his slaves and to forget all about their previous freedom'.[34] As a matter of fact, the Aleuts revolted against Russian rule, as the Russian historian, Shashkov, pointed out in his book on the Russian-American Company, and these revolts led to the extermination of a large part of 'this restless people'. How many Aleuts have perished altogether in the years of Russian rule it is impossible to say. According to the official data of the Russian-American Company there were 8,405 Aleuts in Alaska in 1824, but only 4,363 were recorded in 1859. It would be true to say, therefore, that Russian colonization of Alaska was, from the humanitarian point of view, by no means better than, say, British colonization of Australia in its initial stage.

● 797 Nevertheless, Russian policy towards the native peoples of Russian America did have its brighter aspects. Those responsible for it, however, were not Shelikhov, Baranov and the other newly discovered national heroes of Soviet Russia, but people whom the Soviet régime is not very keen on publicizing, the Christian missionaries. It was they who founded the first schools in Alaska, educated a fair number of natives, and even translated religious books into the Aleut language. The most important Russian churchman working in Alaska was Ivan Veniaminov (1797–1879). He was the author of a grammar of the Aleutian language which was published in St. Petersburg in 1846. The 'apostle of Alaska', as the Russian historian, Zernov, calls him, became later, under the name of Innokentii, Metropolitan of Moscow.[35]

175 The scope of these Russian church activities was, however, very small and one cannot say that the end of Russian rule in Alaska, in 1867, meant in any way a major loss to the native peoples; but of course it was, historically speaking, a great loss for the Russian State. Soviet Russia was

l: Kolarz J-4 (no date) 1954 RR1 Siberia RR1

538 756 It would appear from Soviet evidence that Shamanism experienced a certain revival during the war. Shamans, it is alleged, cunningly used the temporary absence of young communist educated people from the tribal areas to regain some of their former influence. The novel of the well-known Soviet writer Azhaev, *Far from Moscow*, which refers to conditions in a Nanai village contains, for instance, the following passage: 'He (the Shaman) had lain low for a time but resumed his evil practices when war broke out. He saw his chance to profit from the war by a crafty and insolent device. Many of the Nanai boys of the village had been called to the colours. They wrote letters home from the front, and the Shaman made his "prophecies" by these letters. His clients were mostly old women anxious about the fate of their sons, and he fleeced and fooled them to the top of his bent.'[33]

Soviet novels about post-war conditions in the Far East try to convey the impression that the Shamans have ceased to be figures that are respected and feared. The Shamans of these novels are desperately isolated and universally despised. In one case the Shaman is even an enemy agent whom the Americans have sent from Alaska to provoke 'acts of diversion' among the natives of the Soviet Far East.

Some of the Soviet charges made against the Shamans coincide more or less with the criticism which a Western colonial administrator would direct against the African witch-doctors and juju-men. Western and Soviet administrators will, however, often differ as to the way in which the Shaman and the juju-man are to be fought. In West Africa, though not in East Africa, the fight against the juju-man is no more than a campaign of enlightenment in favour of a more hygienic way of life. In other words it is an aim in itself. The fight against the Shaman in the Soviet Far East and Far North is only a small part of a great struggle which is aimed at crushing every kind of political and religious opposition.

THE FIGHT AGAINST CHRISTIAN MISSIONS

797 779 661 In the Far East and Far North the régime fights religion on 'two fronts'. If the liquidation of Shamanism is one aim of communist anti-religious policy, the total prevention of Christian missionary activities is another.

Christianity has had a certain influence on the small nationalities of the Far East. Missionaries preaching the faith in a God who loves and helps man, have tried with some success to oust from the hearts of the natives that deep-rooted fear which is accompanied by belief in evil spirits. But the work of the missionaries was far from being finished when the Soviet authorities interrupted it. As it often happens in Africa, the superstitions of paganism survived even where the Church made formal converts. Those Lamuts of Kamchatka, for instance, who accepted the

1: Kolarz J-4 (no date) 1954 RR1 Siberia RR1

Christian faith, acquired Christian ikons, but did not want to part with their Shamanist idols. The same can be observed among other Far Eastern and Far Northern aborigines. Many Christian converts wear crosses around their necks, but, at the same time, have idols made of walrus bones and reindeer skin on their belts. Naturally the communists have thrown ridicule on this pagan-Christian dualism, which they have described as 'Shamanism-Orthodoxy', but it is an unavoidable transitory stage in the religious development of any primitive people. Certain sections of the northern tribes of Soviet Russia had been sufficiently Christianized at the time of the establishment of Soviet power to resent the forcible withdrawal of priests, and the removal from forests and ways of crosses which, in the popular belief gave protection against 'devils'. A protest lodged by a group of natives of the Beryozovo district in North-western Siberia was characteristic in this respect. The natives in question wrote a letter complaining that the local communist secretary did not allow them to have a priest. Their actual words were: We can't do without a priest because this is our faith.' ('My ne mozhem bez popa potomu chto vera nasha takaya'.) The letter of protest was printed in 1934 in *Revolyutsiya i Natsionalnosti*, the official organ of the Soviet of Nationalities as a general illustration of the fact that priests still enjoyed confidence in certain parts of the Far North.*

Today most of the Far Eastern tribes are outside the reach of those reduced activities which are still permitted to the Russian Orthodox Church in the U.S.S.R. Whilst churches are tolerated in old towns where their existence is traditional, it has been the consistent policy of the Soviet Government not to allow Christian houses of worship to be erected in the so-called 'socialist cities' which are the products of the Soviet period. In the Far East this applies to Magadan and Komsomolsk, places which among their polyglot population count quite a number of detribalized natives. Members of the two larger nationalities of the Soviet Far East, Yakuts and Buryat-Mongols, are, as far as they are converts to Christianity, in a better position than the members of the smaller tribes. There are churches in the capitals of Yakutia and Buryat-Mongolia and presumably also in other localities of these Republics. These are under the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan of Irkutsk and Chita, whose diocese is larger than the whole of Western Europe.

STALIN – THE SUN

Against Shamanism and Christianity the Soviet régime uses one and the same metaphysical antidote – the Lenin-Stalin cult. In the territories of the Far Eastern tribes this cult has a particularly colourful variant. It takes the form of folk-tales which depict Lenin and Stalin as 'super-

* *Revolyutsiya i Natsionalnosti*, Nr 53, July 1934, pp. 51–57.